THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) India is neither a member nor an aspirant for admission to the OIC and has not applied for any status with this Organisation. During earlier OIC sessions some member countries had suggested an Observer Status for India and the issue could be considered at an appropriate time in future. India maintains excellent bilateral relations with most OIC member countries.

Sexual harassment of women workers

1042. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether many women workers in the country face sexual harassment to some extent at their place of work;

(b) if so, the number of cases reported in this regard during the last three years;

(c) what steps Government propose to take to ensure their safety at their place of work; and

(d) what penalties Government propose to introduce if cases of sexual harassment are reported from the Central Government Offices?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) and (b) The Government does not receive complaints directly as these are to be dealt with by Complaints Committees constituted by the employers at their respective workplaces.

(c) A Statement is annexed (See below).

(d) Sexual harassment constitutes a misconduct under Central Civil Service (Conduct Rules), 1964 and penalties prescribed under

Central Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1965 are imposed after following due procedure:—

Statement

Initiatives taken by the Government for prevention of sexual harassment at workplace

* The Government have requested all the Central Ministries/ Departments, Chief Secretaries of all the State Governments/ Union Territory Administration, Universities/Institutions, Central Board of Secondary Education, All India Council of Technical Education to constitute complaints committees and ensure that the guidelines are implemented.

* NCW formulated a Code of Conduct for Workplace, putting down the Supreme Court's guidelines in a simple manner. The Commission has widely circulated this Code of Conduct to all State Commissions for women, Non-Governmental Organisations, the apex bodies of the Corporate Sector, Media, all Ministries and Departments, so that it percolate down to the lowest functionaries and is compiled with by all concerned. The NCW has also instituted a series of interactive meetings with Public Sector Undertakings/Banks/Universities/ Educational Institutions/Hotels/Media etc. to assess the extent of implementation of the guidelines.

* A Central Committee headed by Secretary, Department of Women and Child Development has been constituted in the Department of Women and Child Development to ensure that the complaints committees are constituted and the guidelines are implemented by all concerned.

* Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules have been amended to include sexual harassment as a prohibited conduct.

* Amendments have been made to the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946 so that sexual harassment of women at workplace in the private sector could constitute an offence for which a workman is liable for disciplinary action.